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Oficina do CES n.º 256

Julho de 2006

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PEACEBUILDING AND FAILED STATES SOME THEORETICAL NOTES

On 31 March and 1 April 2006, the Peace Studies Group organized an Experts Meeting within the research project “Peacebuilding processes and state failure strategies”, funded by the Ford Foundation. The texts gathered here correspond to the papers presented in the first part of that Meeting, which dealt with the conceptual debates on “fragile states”, “state failure” processes and peacebuilding. A second group of texts gathering the presentations concerning the three case studies included in the project (Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau) will be published soon.

Three deconstructions

José Manuel Pureza (NEP / Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra)

Since 2005, the Peace Studies Group of the Centre for Social Studies has been developing a research project on “Peacebuilding processes and state failure strategies” funded by the Ford Foundation. The main aim of this project is to analyse the impact of donor cooperation policies in the consolidation or weakening of peace in three former Portuguese colonies: Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. Our research hypothesis is that contemporary peacebuilding processes have been following a standard that, paradoxically, can easily lead to state fragility, failure and ultimately collapse. In order to test this hypothesis, the research has been based upon a twofold approach: on the one hand, a deconstruction of the concept of ‘state failure’, as we want to highlight and clarify the ideological, political and economic strategies that lie behind this concept; and, on the other hand, a critical approach to peacebuilding processes – indeed, we also want to identify the ideological, political and economic assumptions and strategies included within the standard model adopted by peacebuilding processes.

In what follows, I present three different angles of critique of the concept of state failure: genealogies, hierarchies and mechanisms.

1. Genealogies

The concept of state failure emerged from a paradox. During the Cold War, the greatest concern of the developed countries wasn't directed towards chaotic and disaggregated states. Quite the contrary: well organised states, with effective and real sovereignty, were the worry of the more developed states, namely Western states. From the eighties onwards, triumphant neoliberalism sustained a miniaturisation of the state, of the social, political, institutional, economic and financial state. And it is exactly this message of miniaturisation that later placed the fragile, failed, practically inexistent states at the centre of the international debate agenda. In some manner, the concept of the fragile, failed and collapsed state (FFCS) is a product of the neoliberal doctrine. And it became the major concern of the followers of that creed. During the nineties, three different contributions to this growing concern have developed:

a) *A growing attention by the media to emergency situations:* Haiti, Somalia, Yugoslavia, Angola... an entire set of situations that were focuses of an intensified media coverage, resulting in the creation of a sensitivity, of a growing emotion, towards these questions.

b) *Academic research* that, mainly in the United States and the United Kingdom, began to raise the issue of failed states as a fundamental question to be analysed. *The Coming Anarchy*, an absolutely seminal book by Robert Kaplan, is clearly a text that had a widespread impact, well beyond the academic world.

c) The third aspect is precisely *the political decision dimension*, that is, a clear increase by some states, beginning with the US, in placing this expression – failed states – at the core of the international debate. In 1994, the CIA created a ‘state failure task force’, bringing together academics and politicians in a very important think-tank to project this theme onto the international scene.

I believe this genealogy is helps explain this concept’s trajectory. But I also believe that state failure obsession is a consequence of the so-called “decade of failed development”. The nineties were precisely the hangover, the mourning of at least one decade of failed development, with social crises caused by structural adjustment, civil wars, etc. In 1996-97, against the growing evidences of that failure, the World Bank – which had been the mouthpiece of the neoliberal message of cutting back social expenses and downsizing the state – clearly started to abandon that orthodoxy and to draw attention to the relevance of institutions, of good governance, of the state as guarantor of the implementation of global policies at a local scale. The reverse of this new apology is the factual reality of states incapable of accomplishing these new global-oriented functions, as a result of their submission to neoliberal dogma.

2. Hierarchies

This project strongly states that the concept of FFCS is an expression of power. The sole existence of this concept is in itself an expression of power: the power of defining what is the purpose of a state. Those who qualify Guinea-Bissau as a fragile state or Portugal as a successful state are those who have the power to do so and by

doing it are clearly perpetuating a hierarchy. What is at stake here is evidently a kind of world ranking of states. That is, according to this concept, there are states with capacities to perform some tasks and there are states with no capacities to perform them. In fact, there is an implicit catalogue for this purpose. I believe this glance contains two essential elements:

a) A previous definition of what a successful state is. The failed state is an *a contrario* concept, referring to something implicit, which isn't said: the definition of a successful state. And in that implicit space is clearly the archetype, the model of the Western Weberian state. I believe that the concept of FFCS seeks above all to sustain the impossibility of cloning the economic, political, cultural and institutional capacities of the Western state outside its natural context. Being a sort of deviation to this pattern, FFCS are described as the concrete faces of this impossibility. They are defective situations and, as we are aware of, defective behaviours are usually looked at as pathologies. In fact, the medical metaphor is often present in the FFCS literature. Let me give you two examples, among many others. William Zartman (1995) affirms that "state collapse is a long-term degenerative disease". Hellman and Ratner (1992) connect failed states to "debilitating diseases that prevent the afflicted from acting and functioning as they should". Hence, they are sick states. As any fragile entity, they are states with a degenerative disease. They need healing and here the idea of trusteeship comes into the core of the debate.

b) There are several possible hierarchies of states. Perhaps the most emblematic in the literature on FFCS are the following:

- *Successful states*: those that guarantee the great majority of public goods and quality services to their citizens: order, security, justice, infrastructure, health, housing, etc.
- *Fragile states*: those that lack the capacity to offer these public goods or that offer them with less quality than successful states.
- *Failed or collapsed states*: those unable to guarantee any essential public goods to their citizens (Hill, 2005: 145).

3. Mechanisms

How does a state fail? What leads to this kind of situation? Or, as David Sogge asks, “Do states fail or are they pushed?”. This question seems to me of utmost relevance for the development of our research.

The mainstream literature tends to highlight internal mechanisms, namely the quality or lack of quality of the local elites, as the cause of the emergence of FFCS. And so, corruption, patrimonialism, thirst for power or grievances are in fact recurrent categories in FFCS literature.

However, as Susan Woodward (2005) has emphasised, it is not possible to understand the reality of failed states without taking into consideration a combination of internal and external factors. I believe the external dimension is a crucial one. Within this context, Woodward has precisely underlined the importance of the emergence and consolidation of what she refers to as *the responsible state model* in understanding the reality of FFCS. This expression synthesizes a common standard of external demand towards all states but mainly towards those that are institutionally more fragile, including the requirement to rigorously fulfil a huge set of tasks in respect to human rights, minority rights, refugee protection, border control, arms control, debt payment, international trade obligations, rule of law and so on. Quoting Susan Woodward, “state failure is not necessarily a collapse in what a particular state was doing before, but an inability to meet these demands from the outside”.

Having this threefold deconstruction in mind, it becomes very clear that FFCS terminology is *both descriptive and prescriptive*. On one side, it describes a long-lasting situation of crisis of horizontal and vertical legitimacy (not necessarily a crisis in the administrative capacity of the state and other governance actors). But, on the other side, it suggests the imperative of a fixed standard of state’s capacities and instruments.

It is this prescriptive side, and its ideological constructions, that informs most development aid policies. Starting from the assumption that some states have insufficient administrative capacities, the usual answer/policy is the so-called capacity building, which does not answer to the real problems of fragility or even failure. It doesn’t take into due account the fact that quite often state fragility is intimately connected to the condition of “governance states” or “post-conditionality states”, which

are supposed to combine an overload of exogenous defined standards with an internationalization of the most important functions (economy, security, justice, ...). Naming a certain reality as a FFCS is often a starting point for the implementation of these policies whose result is the emergence of... a FFCS!

That ideological background is closely connected to the growing tendency of the North to understand underdevelopment as a danger, as a threat, as Mark Duffield (2002; 2005) has underlined. This recent tendency goes well against the politically dominant perspective of the seventies: peripheral societies as the demanders of a radical reform of the world system. And this changing attitude towards the periphery has led to a major shift in policies: from the new international economic order we came to the redesign of peripheral societies, economies and institutions in order to adjust them to the neoliberal system. This is a complex process made of three ingredients: conflict resolution and social reconstruction, political democracy, and market building. Within this context, peacebuilding became a privileged mechanism for the accomplishment of the main goal of contemporary real global governance: to establish and guarantee a liberal peace in the borderlands.

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Ineffective states and the sovereign frontier

An overview and agenda for research

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This overview uses the concept of human security to understand the renewed Western humanitarian, development and peace interventionism of the post-Cold War period. At the same time, it seeks to show how ideas of state failure are central to this interventionism. Using the concept of a sovereign frontier, the overview concludes by suggesting an agenda for research.

Distinguishing development and underdevelopment biopolitically

Ideas of development, human security and the fragile state are different but interconnected. Human security is usually described as prioritising the security of people rather than states. It extends the idea of security beyond states to include erstwhile modalities of underdevelopment: poverty, population growth, resource competition, health pandemics, forced migration, and so on. The idea of human security emerged in the early 1990s. By the end of the decade it had become well established in policy discourse with various commissions, dedicated institutions and research networks having come into existence. Rather than examining human security as a physical or material condition, that is, something that can be measured or compensated for, this overview examines human security as a relation of governance. Insofar as some states are better than others at supporting the human security of their citizens, it has a distinction between *effective* and *ineffective* states implicit within it. As a relation of governance, human security can be understood as a mobilising set of discursive practices whereby the international community of effective states understands and intervenes within the world's ineffective ones. Moreover, since human security speaks in the name of people, rights and freedom, it is a specifically liberal strategisation of power.

Since the term 'human security' has a certain familiarity with academics and practitioners, it offers a way of distinguishing between *geopolitics*, or the security of states, and *biopolitics*, that is, the security of people, especially their collective form as population. Biopolitics is a type of liberal governance discovered by the French political philosopher Michel Foucault. It is not always easy to distinguish geopolitics from

biopolitics because, to lesser or greater degrees, they exist together. Geopolitics inhabits the register of states, territories and political alliances. However, territories also come with populations and modern and effective states are concerned to support the collective life of population in all its productive, reproductive and prudential complexity. One example of biopolitics is the rise of the welfare state within Europe.

Speaking in the name of people, rights and freedom, liberalism is different from biopolitics but, at the same time, interconnected with it. Historically, liberal governments have used their support of life and liberty as a marker of their ‘civilisation’ in relation to the ‘barbarity’ of others. Biopolitics has been neglected in mainstream IR and development studies. In the case of the latter, this is all the more surprising since development, with its aim of bettering marginal and vulnerable populations, can be understood as an international biopolitics; in this case, a biopolitics that has global population as its object.

In teasing out the connection between biopolitics and development, a starting point is the vague way that development itself is generally understood. For most people, development is associated with poverty reduction, or the rhetoric of partnership and empowerment. It is possible, however, to distinguish development and underdevelopment more clearly in biopolitical terms. That is, in relation to how effective and ineffective states differentially support life in their territories. In this respect, the great tsunami disaster of December 2004 is instructive. Despite the loss of life and destruction of property being of a totally different order, within 24 hrs the world’s major reinsurance companies had estimated their losses would be half \$21 billion incurred when hurricane winds hit Florida earlier the same year. The reason given was that most of the people and business around the Indian Ocean rim were not insured. Using the metaphor of *insured* versus *non-insured* life, a means of distinguishing development and underdevelopment biopolitically is suggested.

Life within European mass consumer societies is supported by a variety of state-led or regulated insurance and asset-based welfare safety nets covering birth, education, health, employment protection and pensions. In comparison, the tsunami victims, together with the people of Niger, Darfur, and so on, lie outside such social protection systems: they are ‘non-insured’. To present development and underdevelopment in this biopolitical way emphasises the gulf between these worlds. Moreover, it is evident that current development practice is not concerned with

extending to the people of Africa, for example, similar levels of social protection enjoyed by people in Europe. To the contrary, development appears more a technology of security protecting mass consumer society from the risks of the spontaneous circulation of unskilled migrants, asylum seekers, and so on, associated with underdevelopment. Since the 1960s, for example, the history of migration in Europe has been written in terms of the anxieties caused by the asymmetric demands made by non-insured migrants on European welfare systems.

Development as containment

Rather than working to reduce the income gap or equalise levels of social protection, development is better understood as a technology of security that functions to contain non-insured life. Moreover, it is a liberal technology since it speaks in the name of people while governing them through their rights and freedoms. Development is a trusteeship that educates its beneficiaries to use their freedom wisely. It is in relation to this context that human security can now be reconsidered. The idea of human security did not emerge ready made. It builds upon and merges with early ideas of sustainable development. This has its modern origins as a liberal counter-critique of the ‘modernisation’ strategies being pursued by nationalist elites during the period of decolonisation. That is, strategies of ‘catch up’ based on reducing the income gap between rich and poor countries. Modernisation is different from development. It is associated with state-led industrialisation, import substitution, the expansion of public welfare bureaucracies, and so on.

Pioneered during the 1960s by the NGO movement, sustainable development provided a critique of this ‘top down’, urban-based modernisation. It substitutes a vision of people-centred, ‘bottom up’ community development *based on self-reliance*. Sustainable development blends ideas of community development with concerns over the environmental limits of economic growth. The life valued by sustainable development is that which can maintain its self-reliance by effectively managing the contingencies of its existence. Development is a biopolitics of self-reliance that can be contrasted with the insurance-based welfare technologies that support life in mass consumer societies. Self-reliance is the biopolitics of non-insured populations. It constitutes the basis of development and reflects the long-standing and ingrained

assumption in the West that non-Western peoples are essentially self-reproducing in terms of their general economic and social well-being.

From this perspective, humanitarian intervention is an international insurance of last resort when the self-reliance of non-insured populations breaks down. Since self-reliance under globalised conditions is impossible, this can be understood as a permanent emergency. Indeed, this permanent emergency is the hidden heart of development itself. Sustainable development embodies an unstable and crisis producing formula for sharing the world with others. It suggests a world divided biopolitically between life supported by insurance and asset-based welfare systems as opposed to non-insured life expected to be self-reliant. Rather than a strategy of modernisation, it is in this context that development operates as a technology of security for containing and managing the risks associated with poverty and unchecked human circulation.

The crisis of containment

While being pioneered by NGOs, sustainable development became official donor policy at the end of the Cold War. At the same time, anxieties were aroused over the prevalence of internal war. Both sustainable development and internal war take self-reliant life, rather than the state, as their reference point. In this respect, however, they are opposites. Within policy discourse, sustainable development is seen as strengthening self-reliance while internal war is presented as destroying it. Internal war is understood by policy makers as undermining containment and promoting a crisis of circulation. That is, encouraging population displacement, migration, asylum seekers as well as shadow economies, arms smuggling, drugs, international crime, terrorism, and so on. In other words, internal war encourages the circulation of non-insured life able to penetrate and destabilise mass society.

In a single concept, the idea of human security brings together these changing perceptions of development and security. It contains the optimism of sustainable development while, at the same time, it draws attention to the conditions that menace international stability. Human security also connects with ideas concerning the radical interdependence of events in a globalised world. For example, it informs the idea of the 'responsibly to protect'. This phrase captures the custom and practice of international intervention during the 1990s. Basically, if an ineffective state is unable to support the

human security of its citizens, resulting in a supreme humanitarian emergency, as a last resort a responsibility to protect human security passes to the international community of effective states. The responsibility to protect, which is currently driving reform within the UN system, signals that moral considerations now trump international law. It reflects a shift from an international system based upon the formal or *de jure* equality of states to a situation of their informal or *de facto* inequality.

From fragile to governance states

Although the ‘human’ in human security implies universal or cosmopolitan values, from the outset policy discourse has been clear that the territorial nation-state is and will remain the key institution for providing and maintaining human security. Interventions under the rubric of the responsibility to protect are not about upholding a universal or global citizenship; rather, they are a temporary international occupation until an effective local state can be reconstructed. In this respect, human security indicates that the state is now back at the centre of development policy. More importantly perhaps, it signals the return of the state as a means of securing non-insured life and controlling global circulation.

In relation to this task the problem of weak or fragile states has moved up the policy agenda. It is in these ungoverned spaces that the threat of bad forms of global circulation is at its height. The aim of current policy, it could be argued, is to transform the fragile state into what has been called a ‘governance state’. Policy discourse draws its inspiration from the donor-elected success stories in Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Mozambique, Ghana, and so on. These states have undergone nearly two decades of World Bank structural adjustment. Selective donor sponsorship has produced a pro-reform elite within them. Governance states are ‘post-conditional’ because reform no longer has to be imposed from outside. Neoliberal reform takes on the dynamic of a shared enterprise. At the same time, the boundaries between the inside and the outside of the state have blurred. Rather than acting externally on the state, donor governments are better conceived as part of the state itself. The key policy innovation in achieving this integration has been the shift from supporting projects to funding through the budget. Within governance states, while territorial integrity is respected, the international donors and NGOs now exercise an unparalleled degree of

influence over the core economic and welfare functions of the state. That is, its core biopolitical functions.

Policy discourse on fragile states envisages their transformation into governance states. Due to their lack of capacity however, new instruments are required. Difficult working environments such as Haiti, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and so on, are laboratories for these new technologies. With the intention of acting as stepping stones to the governance state, these technologies have three main features. First, reflecting the lack of state capacity, they are cut down versions of the Poverty Reduction Strategy programmes operating in governance states. They share the same principles but are less administratively demanding. Second, they usually involve some type of pooling of funding allowing different donors to harmonise behind a shared policy. Finally, they involve a form of ‘shadow alignment’ where mechanisms replicate state functions, for example, a budget or ministry of health, without being controlled by the state. It is argued that, in the fullness of time, the fragile state will grow into and take over such shadow mechanisms.

The sovereign frontier: an agenda for research

During the Cold War, the international political architecture was based on respect for territorial integrity plus non-interference in domestic affairs. The technologies described above in relation to governance and fragile states did not exist. The post-Cold War institutional architecture has changed. While territorial integrity remains, sovereignty over life within ineffective states has become internationalised, negotiable and contingent. It has already been argued that development is a technology of security for containing non-insured life. Contingent sovereignty can be understood as a sovereign frontier. That is, a zone of negotiation, exchange and identity bringing together the international community with state incumbents, civil associations and populations within ineffective states. It is a fluid and relational zone. Through policies of coherence the sovereign frontier is currently a site of institutional experimentation involving new relations between politics and aid, and state and non-state actors. Hybrid governance structures now bring together ineffective states, donors, UN agencies, NGOs, militaries, private companies, and so on, in new ways. Territorial integrity is not threatened by these interventions, the main issue is how people are supported and

policed within a zone of contingent sovereignty. In this respect, fragile states are laboratories for emerging techniques to consolidate the West's new and expanded sovereign frontier.

As a relational zone of negotiation and interaction, the sovereign frontier suggests a framework for research that has dimensions of both space and time. For example,

- What are the spatial characteristics of the West's sovereign frontier? How far does it extend? How do its characteristics vary geographically?
- What is the history of the sovereign frontier? How does contingent sovereignty emerge and under what conditions?

Spatial variation

This overview has sketched the situation in relation to ineffective states and zones of crisis. While this frontier is, itself, extensive and under-researched, it also leads to a set of related questions – what does the frontier look like in East Europe? The Middle East? Latin America? East Asia? The West's sovereign frontier is capable of spatial variation, exhibiting different forms of engagement, interaction and power effects. In this respect, the views of the modern liberal imperialist Robert Cooper are useful. He distinguishes a European 'post-modern' political space from its borderland of 'pre-modern' states on the one hand and strong 'modern' states (Russia, India, China, etc.) on the other. Western development discourse is today largely focused on what Cooper would call the pre-modern world. Aspects of this discourse have been sketched above.

However, what is the nature of this frontier in relation to Cooper's strong or modern states? How does the expansion of China, for example, impact on Western development policy? At a time of indefinite war, can we see a new relationship emerging between democratic and authoritarian states as part of this frontier?

Historical variation

Regarding the history of the sovereign frontier, an important factor is the rehabilitation of liberal imperialism in the West following the new wave of post-Cold War interventionism. At the same time, there is a growing literature on the recurrence of liberal forms colonial administration within contemporary development policy. Fragile state discourse, for example, reproduces key elements and assumptions of the colonial practice of indirect rule or Native Administration. If policy discourse is not to endlessly repeat itself, the constitution and operation of the sovereign frontier needs to be properly appreciated.

“The 9/11 factor and failed states” – food for thought notes

Robert Matthews (CIP – Centre for Peace Research, Madrid)

My working hypothesis in this paper is the following: 9/11 has meant much more for geopolitics and much less for the “biopolitics” of fragile or failed states to which Mark Duffield refers. The linking of western/US security to state failure has not resulted in fewer states on this list or appreciably less incidence of governmental breakdown in the past four and a half years. In fact, it may be argued that the injection of external state security (as opposed to the internal security of the state in crisis) may have been counterproductive in distorting the problems and skewing solutions.

Nevertheless, there is no shortage of commentary to the effect that 9/11 has given failed states an official prominence heretofore unknown and that this attention has benefited a variety of academic and humanitarian organizations. Implicit in the rhetoric is that this has been beneficial in terms of dealing effectively with the problem of failed states. There exists the opinion that 9/11 and the international terrorist threat has raised consciousness of the problem and the problematic of failed states and its link to the negative externality of terrorism. There has been much written about how fragile states are now front and centre because of terrorism.

Some samples of opinion on the effect of 9/11, terrorism and security issues on the issue of failed states include the following:

The events of 11 September 2001 have given the issue of post-conflict reconstruction a new prominence on the global agenda and an urgency to do better. Governments throughout the ‘Global North’ and multilateral bodies such as the United Nations, the World Bank and regional security organizations recognize that post-conflict reconstruction is no longer just a priority in the developing world, where the vast majority of conflicts take place, but that in today’s interconnected world, failure to rebuild war-torn societies threatens everyone’s security. (Burke, 2006: 3)

Rosa Meneses, for example writes that “the US as well as Europe have revised their foreign policy to include fragile states as one of the new global threats to their security to be confronted to the same degree as terrorism or WMD. Until 9/11 it was only humanitarian organizations that worried about fragile states” (*EL Mundo*, March 26, 2006).

After 9/11, Afghanistan was seen as the prime example of the intersection of state collapse and the incubation of international as well as the security issue of global narco-trafficking. To Afghanistan we can add the Sudan as bases for Al Qaeda. Kenya and Yemen have also served to harbour Osama Bin Laden.

Yet, while 9/11 brought security and antiterrorism to the fore, security issues nevertheless muddy the development debate and may even hinder the work of NGOs. Stewart Patrick, of the Center for Global Development, writes that the link between failed states and security is not so clear-cut; failed states represent generally much more of a threat internally to their own populations. Patrick is persuasive when he argues that states like Somalia and Liberia represent less of a threat than functioning states like Pakistan and Russia. Terrorist states or those which possess the conditions to produce terrorists display many other traits besides those associated with failed states, including religious, political and geographic factors.

Thus, we may list some caveats to the notion that the post-9/11 world has had a positive impact on resolving the problem of failed states.

1. Some observers believe that terrorism and conflict prevention constitute a dangerous link because making the connection skews funding and perverts development and state-building priorities in two ways: a) countries are targeted on the basis of security considerations rather than their degree of failure; b) within countries primacy is given to security measures over social and economic development (see Afghanistan).

Moreover, inasmuch as each case represents a unique set of circumstances and a separate set of responses, the US after 9/11 has taken an oversimplified approach, made more difficult and remote the possibility of complex and intelligently elaborated responses, and postponed the day for effective solutions.

2. If the issue of combating international terrorism has focused attention on failed states, the success rate doesn't appear to reflect it. Root causes of conflict remain

unresolved, which in turn leads to economic and criminal violence that has a similar negative impact on human security and equitable economic growth. Trends have continued since the 1990s.

3. There has also not been an appreciable increase in state and multilateral budgets dedicated to addressing the problems of failed states. Susan Woodward states that “widespread consensus exists that economic resources do matter to success [in peace implementation]. The surest way to failure [...] is not to provide sufficient external resources in support of a peace agreement.” (2002: 184)

4. The US has subordinated development needs to security criteria. In a sense, 9/11 has generated a continuation of cold war priorities where development aid was tied to security. Rogue states are emphasized over failed states. Rogue states are mentioned TEN times, failed states ONCE in the National Security Strategy (NSS) document of 2002. In the NSS document of 2006 failed states are mentioned TWICE. We see gross skewing of budgetary priorities when we compare the expenditure on the war on terror with development aid not linked to a terrorist threat. Yet, even when security is the chief concern, the US (a) has emphasized the Middle East where connections to international terrorism rather than failed states are strongest, and (b) has responded with a military approach (even in Latin America) rather than a conflict prevention/development approach.

If many failed states are orphans of the Cold War, with a few qualified exceptions, this has not translated into their being US focuses of failed state concern today. Examples include Angola, Nicaragua and Afghanistan prior to and after to 9/11. The Clinton administration, although intervening briefly in Somalia, Haiti initially and later in the Balkans to prevent ethnic cleansing and save lives ostensibly, ignored the battlegrounds of the 1980s where Cold War regional strife left other nations failed or failing. In Afghanistan, Nicaragua, and Angola there was no sustained effort to shore up the socio-political systems in order to prevent widespread violence and social disintegration. In the case of Nicaragua, for example, more people died in the 1990s from criminal violence than in the contra war. The neglect of Afghanistan was a major factor in the growth of Al Qaeda and the proliferation of terrorism. And yet the evidence of this was not enough to provoke the US to action. With the qualified exception of Afghanistan, the Bush administration has continued the indifference of the 1990s. Part

of this is simply due to what Paul Berman has recently termed “the romance of the ruthless” military solutions, and a confidence that the military should be the lead institution in confronting the problem of state disintegration and instability.

5. To the extent that poverty and inequality are being addressed, development aid policies – especially those of the US – seem to be on a kind of autopilot. In many respects the US work on failed states is still operating on pre 9/11 assumptions regarding faith in electoral democracy (leaving aside the US record of applying it selectively and ignoring or undermining it when convenient), free market criteria and the conditionality of IMF programs. Some controversial opinion exists, however, that a strong, charismatic and honest indigenous leader may be more essential to successful state-building than the effectiveness of international assistance (Moreales-Gamboa and Baranyi, 2005: 26).

The US millennium fund, with its requirements on good government and market economics (market democracy), reveals a US expectation that fragile states are expected to assume responsibility for problems that are global in nature. Also, the criterion here is not the humanitarian concern regarding failing states so much as the demonstration of their viability.

6. The Bush administration demonstrated a clear aversion to copying anything that Bill Clinton did or recommended (ABC: Anything But Clinton; or better yet, All Bluster, No Competence); it is not likely that, absent 9/11, the Bush administration would have taken up the job of remedying failed states or made even a serious effort at economic development. Remember Bush spoke of undoing Clinton’s policies of engagement in Africa and the Balkans, opposed nation-building and called for a “humble” (read neo-isolationist) brand of foreign policy.

7. The US not only has given priority to security over development but its geopolitical/hegemonic goals have taken precedence over security and here the case of Iraq is the key example. Note also below the relative inattention to Afghanistan and the abandonment of Somalia, the poor record in Sudan – places where indeed the conjuncture of failed state conditions and security threat exists.

The US in two cases of (non) intervention

In the case of Afghanistan, with its failing state status and high security profile, it can be argued that the US and Europe (NATO) have pursued military/security objectives over development and the need to address deeper structural problems in the country. In the view of many, the last four years of intervention have actually moved the country backward to a less secure and more fragile position than existed before 9/11.

Even if in the near future the US and its allies were to put a halt to the growing violence and establish a secure environment, Afghanistan could well prove illustrative of the proposition held by many analysts that stopping the violence in these states does not lead inevitably to state building and is not a substitute for it.

Moreover, the Bush administration, to the consternation of military and security personnel in Afghanistan, easily diverted military and economic resources as well as its attention to Iraq in 2003 – a country that was neither a failed state nor linked with international terrorism. Today, it is estimated that the foreign military presence in Afghanistan is at least half of what is needed for security alone. Indeed, the Bush administration's neglect of that country in favour of concentration on Iraq has left Afghanistan close to a failed narco-state and has provided the conditions for it to become a destabilizing influence in Central Asia. Afghanistan is a kind of touchstone for the proposition that Washington, its boilerplate rhetoric to the contrary, pursues its geostrategic aims to the disadvantage of any obligations to address failed states (or serious effort to combat terrorism, I would add).

In the National Security Strategy document of 2006 Afghanistan merits only a short paragraph, in which the country's "two successful elections" are noted and it is lauded for being "a staunch ally in the war on terror." As for challenges, the N.S.S. confines itself to admitting that "much work remains" and calling for the "support of the United States and the entire international community." Left unmentioned are the dependence of Afghanistan's economy on the heroin trade, the recent resurgence of the Taliban, the lack of effective control of the central government over regional warlords, the border tensions between Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the slow pace of post-war reconstruction.¹

¹ See "Insurgents, Warlords and Opium Roil Afghanistan," *Power and Interest News Report*, November 18, 2005.

The Sudan and Somalia, both failing or failed states and with links to international terrorism are two other examples. The general and appalling inattention to the DRC is the most egregious example of the fate of a failed state that presents no direct security threat to the West.

The United Nations

There is some evidence that the UN, with its emphasis on development needs and INTERNAL security for the populations of failing states, has been more successful than functional states (the US especially) in resolving conflicts. To the extent that this is true, it is another indication that 9/11 probably hasn't meant much. A recent RAND study, "The UN's Role in Nation-Building" by James Dobbin *et al.*, analyzed United Nations' humanitarian, political and economic activities in eight post-conflict situations since World War II. The outcomes of these eight cases were compared with outcomes in eight cases in which the United States led nation-building efforts over the same period. The study determined that the UN-led operations successfully achieved sustained peace in seven of eight cases and democratization in six of eight. The U.S.-led operations achieved sustained peace in only four of eight cases and democratization in two of eight cases. While conceding that they could have reached differing conclusions depending on the cases selected, the authors of the study conclude that "the United Nations provides the most suitable institutional framework for most nation-building missions, one at a comparatively high success rate and the greatest degree of international legitimacy." (Burke, 2006: 5)

Europe

If it cannot be said that Washington would have acted very differently, is it possible to say that Europe or Japan, for example, have approached the question of failed states more attentively or at least differently than they would have otherwise before 9/11?

Probably so. Europe has for some time evinced a more nuanced view of the conjuncture between failed states and security. While the US links development aid and terrorism, the EU (and Javier Solana) speaks of the two as separate categories. Europe, as the largest trading bloc, has a powerful instrument to use as leverage in resolving

violent conflict and achieving peace-building. Europe also has a somewhat different perspective because of its proximity to terrorist centers and unstable states or regions (the Middle East as well as the Balkans, for example), and its modern immigration history. The proximity of instability can produce immigration problems and organized crime – all of which are translated as security threats – as well as terrorism.

Europe, more so than Washington, continues to stress conflict prevention rather than reaction to failed and conflicted states – the former focus clearly a more complex and challenging proposition. More so than North Americans, Europeans continue to address the issues of poverty and inequality, rendering security a somewhat more contingent element. This emphasis on development irrespective of security, while modified in the post-9/11 world, continues a distinction that was also true in the Cold War. Within Europe, Denmark and Sweden are oriented more to development aid than say, Spain and Portugal. Development aid is ultimately more important than achieving cease fire or peace agreements because of the high recidivism rate (return to conflict).

Yet, overall, Europe has followed all too closely the US example of concentrating on the problem of terrorism rather than development. It has been ruled too much by the guidelines set forth by the US in defining its global war on terrorism and on focusing on those countries which seem to represent the greatest terrorist threat, i.e., those in the Middle East. Half of EU money in Iraq is going toward the military and half toward multilateral aid. Finally, despite a growth in these fragile/failed states to number perhaps 50, and a ratcheting up of interest and attention, there is not much evidence overall of increased European budgets in the area of failed states.

Conclusion

The terrorist incentive has been a kind of catch 22 until now: highlighting the problem on the one hand but diverting the attention of the US and other effective states away from the poorest, most egregious examples to the areas that seem to be hotbeds of terrorism. The chief effect of 9/11 seems to be to have skewed priorities and attention to states providing a locus or potential for terrorism, irrespective of whether or not they are failed or failing states. The aid and support has tended to be in the direction of security aid and short-term solutions rather than economic aid over the longer term. Within this model the US has tended to see immediate threats as of more concern than potentially

destabilizing situations in the future. Even when there is evidence that the lack of stability or possible disintegration contains a real danger of cultivating international terrorism as in the Sudan, the US has been slow to respond adequately because of its distraction with the Middle East. While there have been an surge of studies of the links between failed states and global security/terrorism in the past five years, the West all too often takes its cues from Washington and is still remiss in addressing these situations forthrightly or developing a serious and comprehensive policy toward failed/fragile states in the wake of 9/11.

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Peacebuilding and “failed states”: some initial considerations

Susan L. Woodward (Professor of Political Science, The Graduate Center, The City University of New York)

Civil wars vary enormously – in their causes, duration, intensity, territorial extent, and goals. What all civil wars do have in common is their origins in the challenge of some group or groups to the *authority* of the state to rule – that is, to the rules defining who has the right to rule, make decisions, and use the instruments of coercion that are specific to the state to enforce them, and the rules on how they are legitimately selected.

In this sense, civil wars are always about state failure. That statement, however, requires a definitional distinction between the two characteristics of a state – a *moral* aspect, in the sense of an authority to rule (including to use coercion legitimately, should it be necessary) and all the consequences for a population of that moral definition (who is included, thus what their identity is, how those rules affect daily life, etc.), and secondly an efficient, *administrative* aspect, in the sense of a set of actors, offices, and the bases of their authority to implement those decisions. State failure is the loss of that authority, the moral aspect; it may not be a loss of the administrative capacity.

This distinction separates peacebuilding activities, aimed at ending a civil war, from other uses of the term “state failure.” The term has assumed such widespread use in the past 5 years, particularly since the U.S. National Security Strategy of September 2002, which is said to be a direct response to the attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, and the conditions in Afghanistan – declared a failed state as a result – that made it possible for Al Q’aeda to operate internationally, that it is ever less of analytical use and ever more seen as a political instrument. To the extent it has any analytical worth at all, however, state failure is a label used more for state *incapacity*, not contested legitimacy – an inability to prevent actions that threaten the security of the major powers of the international system, and by extension, it is said, international peace and security more generally. It is the outcomes that serve to define state failure, and an untested presumption about state incapacity their explanation.

Countries where peacebuilding operations are sent may well lack the capacity to prevent such threats – most specifically lack of control of their borders against transnational, organized crime organizations trafficking in illicit goods like drugs and

guns, but also people and money, the exodus of refugees and asylum seekers, the trade in arms that should be controlled according to international agreements (especially mobile weapons of mass destruction), and infectious disease; the internationally accepted operational definition of sovereignty is still control over the territory claimed. The problem of peacebuilding, however, lies with the first aspect, *authority* over the right to rule and the use of force. No matter what the specific causes of the violence and subsequent war, it is a challenge to the existing structure of political power and its distribution of privilege and rights. Without some agreement on the post-war rules, either an acceptance of the pre-war status quo, a formalization of the results of war, or some post-war constitution as a result of external mediation, the continuing uncertainty about the relative power of competing groups will keep the war going.

Peacebuilding literature and aid programs make a mistake, I suggest, in saying that state institutions have collapsed and that the problem of state-building is to build capacity. In fact, during war, governments continue to perform many functions. Challengers hold territory by setting up alternative administrations and winning support and loyalty from local populations. Local officials look to protect their populations even if the state's overall capacity to do so has gone, or they move with their displaced populations into refugee camps or places for the internally displaced and continue to govern them. Organization for war itself tends to promote the consolidation of armed groups and their organization into increasingly rule-bound, internally coherent and structured hierarchies of command and control (Zahar; Sanin), or for those who do not so consolidate to lose. The multiple individual loyalties and local conflicts that play a dominant role in the violence of war (Kalyvas) also begin to congeal behind the metanarrative of the conflict and its simpler division of political identities and loyalties into enemy camps, friend and foe, and their respective claims to rule.

Without some stabilization in the constitutional questions – the balance of power among groups and their right to rule over others – the activities necessary to state functions and supportive societal and private actors will not take place. Nearly all programs aimed at “capacity-building” – a civilian police, a reformed army, a civil service, governmental ministries and their procedures, judges and courts, human rights activists and protectors, a banking system, civil-society organizations, political parties, etc. – will fail to be sustainable and combine together to create a functioning (preferably

democratic) system. Thus, in this fundamental, constitutional sense, state-building is the precondition of peacebuilding, it is the first task.

What that strategy implies in each specific case cannot be predefined. We can, however, attempt to classify post-conflict countries in terms of the degree to which the war ends with a general settlement of the political, constitutional question of who rules, or not. Military victories, for example, are characterized by the emergence during war of strong political leaders who have either created a new structure of power and governmental institutions during the war or have the power to do so immediately afterwards, as Jeremy Weinstein analyzes in places like Uganda, or can be said to apply to the civil wars won by communist parties in the 1940s-1960s, such as Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam, Cuba, and North Korea.

The peace agreement, whether heavily or only nominally assisted by third-party outsiders, while a negotiated end to the violence, may also have settled the basic questions, as in El Salvador or Mozambique or countries like Guatemala or Sierra Leone where the negotiated settlement actually reflected a military victory of the pre-war power structure. Elisabeth Wood argues that the civil war in El Salvador was a war for democratization against an oligarchic regime (and compares it to the South African case, which tends to be classified as a negotiated transition to democracy, not a civil war, although it also was that).

This trade-off, where the political bargain is actually between class rebels and those with economic power, between democracy and structure of *economic (class)* power, does raise an important question about the extent to which the stabilizing agreement only makes possible a peaceful struggle for the continued ambitions of many to transform the state (and the structure of economic power with it) after the cease-fire and thus whether such cases belong to a third category where the peace agreement only lays out procedures for settling the constitutional issues (e.g., a transitional or interim government, a constitutional assembly, an election), as in Angola, Afghanistan, Kosovo, or Iraq but does not reduce the level of uncertainty about power enough to stabilize the post-war transition.

A fourth category would be those where the peace agreement does not settle the constitutional issues, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Dayton Agreement would appear to have done so, but a coalition between one of the three warring parties and the outside interveners did not accept it and used [are using] the post-war period to change

that constitutional agreement), and the post-war period is a continuation of the wartime struggle pure and simple, but with externally imposed constraints on the use of force.

Making these distinctions should give analytical leverage over the over-used concept of a “hurting stalemate” (Zartman) as the cause of war termination, that is, that wars end because people are tired of the violence and destruction and because armed groups no longer see the possibility for a military victory. Even if this is the case, it does not tell us enough about the process of peacebuilding after a cease-fire. Did the structure of power that provoked the war emerge intact after the war? Did the war produce leaders and power bases that are seen as incompatible with peace (e.g., with democracy), as is usually implied in the labels “warlords,” “radicals,” “extremists,” or the casual use of the term “spoilers”? Is the nature of the political agreement for a cease-fire (whether it is called a peace agreement or not) a real settlement, or only a displacement of the task of the war onto the post-war period, and if so, are the new procedures agreed? Whose agreement matters empirically – the warring parties’, or the external powers’ who choose to intervene for reasons of their own interests and political goals? Does the ceasefire agreement allow space and establish procedures that at least reduce the level of uncertainty for the general population sufficiently so that other activities can go forward, or not?

A pervasive and justified criticism of most peacebuilding activities and donor projects is that they ignore power and politics; not only are they supply-driven, taking little account of local “demand,” context, culture, and memory, but they are also technocratic to concede to the constraints of intervention and legal charters of intervening parties and organizations. The focus is on “capacity-building,” or what I call a “public administration” approach to state-building. One can identify at least 4 problems with the current policies:

1. The goal of this capacity-building program is a state that fulfils the tasks that outsiders consider necessary for their own national interests and for international order, what I have elsewhere called an “internationally responsible state” and “reliable partner” for outsiders. The concept of state failure is particularly prominent in this conceptualization of the state – the “failure” applies to specific international obligations (debt servicing and repayment, security for foreign direct investors, enforcement of

trade agreements, control over trafficking in illicit goods, people, disease, and other transborder activities seen as dangerous to others, human rights guarantees at home, a security apparatus for the international war on terror and other intelligence and counterinsurgency operations, and so forth). These tasks may well not be a priority for peace consolidation, and they tend to ignore the domestic bases of the authority as well as capacity to fulfil these obligations, including the financial resources to create and, especially, sustain these capacities.

2. This capacity-building aims at building what one might call a Weberian state, one based on legal-rational authority, technical standards, and enforcement capacity. This may be quite contrary to the existing capacity and it may conflict with the bases of political authority established during the war or possible in the immediate post-war period (for example, land privatization, transparency and formalization of accounts, or a state centred in the finance ministry and central bank rather than the spending ministries such as education, health, and communal infrastructure such as electricity, water, and local roads and police). It is a transformative agenda that may not have domestic support, and even if it does, is hugely demanding, often creating an overload on domestic resources that can itself be the cause of new failure. The specific elements of a neoliberal agenda in this regard have been frequently criticized, but the way they play out in a peacebuilding context has not been studied in the detail it needs.

3. It ignores the need for reducing power uncertainties and establishing authority – the moral aspect of the state – and it may well *increase* the uncertainty. For example, studies of peacebuilding transitions reveal genuine confusion among locals about who the government is, since donors tend to support the social services aspect of states in the initial period and may well be the most visible. Also, programs requiring new forums of community participation to distribute aid monies, or gender mainstreaming through quotas of women's participation, or decentralization of the implementation of key policy decisions (such as land privatization), or requiring implementation of donor programs by outsiders (international NGOs, foreign accounting firms, etc.) because they do not trust the government, even the introduction of democratic elections early before the institutional conditions exist – these are all highly disruptive, and in some cases even *revolutionary* programs that can create more uncertainty and thus insecurity, rather than less.

4. It ignores the need to build a local constituency for peace, its personal risks, and the costs as well as benefits of the specific political outcome of the war or peace negotiations, which is always necessary to a certain extent even if, in general, people are tired of war and genuinely welcome peace (true in most cases, if not all). Much of the work in peacebuilding is done, and must be done, by citizens outside government initiative and resources, so this neglect is far more serious than, e.g., securing a “correct” vote in post-war elections. Included in this neglect is a failure to assess the distributive consequences of donor policies which could create new bases for war or worsen the perception of injustice that fuelled the war, for example, regional inequalities, economic inequalities, or power inequalities.

In sum, in regard to the questions posed for this session:

1. Is statebuilding a peacebuilding strategy?

If done correctly, it is the essential task of peacebuilding, even though an effective strategy for economic development must accompany it.

2. What are the most frequent obstacles that the use of this terminology poses to peacebuilding?

There are many problems with the concept of state failure. I will single out two for particular consideration in the early phases of peacebuilding. First, it is highly insulting and even if an operational definition of what failure means can be agreed (e.g., did the government fail to protect its citizens from physical threat and open violence? Did it fail to protect its citizens against a hugely destructive natural disaster or disease epidemic? Was it willing to violate all human rights, above all to safety against abuse by official security forces, in the interests of fighting an insurgency or defending the power of the regime against challengers?), the label is more likely to provoke political quarrels along the lines defined by the war itself and conflicting interpretations of cause and guilt. Second, its substantive focus tends to be on state administrative capacity, not authority, and on the capacities needed to satisfy external parties (persons, states, organizations, conventions), not what would be the needs of peace, the local capacities actually needed to satisfy these external requirements, and the specific type and amount of resources needed to do both.

3. Is it possible to identify State performance indicators for peace consolidation?

I suggest a few below, in hopes of provoking discussion:

A. How to measure the level of power uncertainty – is it low enough to allow the tasks of state administration and the private, economic, civil-society, and political-society activities to proceed?

B. How to identify the contribution of the cease-fire or peace agreement (and the terms of its implementation) to a stabilization of power uncertainties? What is the starting point politically?

C. How to measure overload – when are donors' requirements on the government asking too much (too many forms, too rapid a response, too many tasks, too many budgetary resources) in relation to existing resources and conditions, and how would one measure this?

D. How to measure the distributive biases on the two issues that really matter to people in peace consolidation, first, employment opportunities (income-paying jobs, conditions for subsistence and survival, or whatever else is locally appropriate), and second, security against open violence and abuse by those with power resources? Do these two depend on supporting a particular political party, are some localities or regions favoured over others, are the procedures for resolving legal disputes, such as over property, clear and public, or does one need to find someone with specialized knowledge?

E. Are rules over the use of force gaining clarity and societal recognition, and are there measures of their effective enforcement? What social and cultural mechanisms are active in assisting this restoration of domestic peace and peaceful negotiation of conflict? Are indicators of violence actually rising, and if so, what kinds of violence (is it violence that reduces trust in the government and the peace, or not, as the comparison between El Salvador and Guatemala by William Stanley is able to distinguish)?

F. Are essential services being restored (or, if new, being provided), such as garbage collection, electricity, health clinics, clean water, public schools? (This particular indicator must be locally specific, of what the people themselves identify and expect. One method to identify this may be "rumours" and small talk in public spaces, such as markets, rather than formal opinion surveys.)

Remarks on assessing influences over development / aid policies

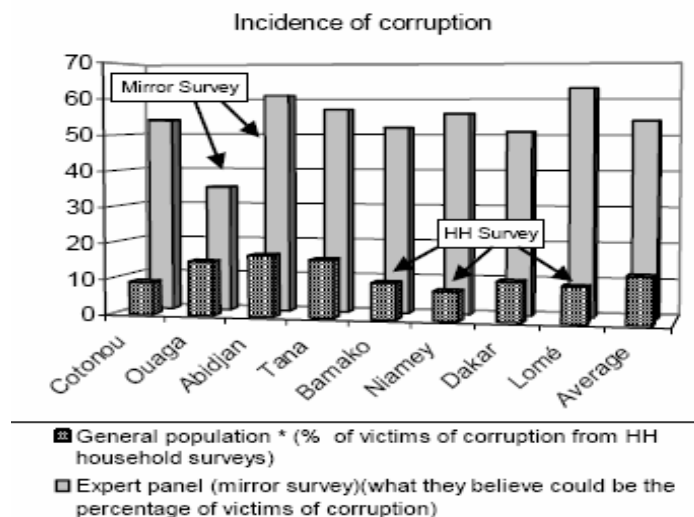
David Sogge (Fellow of the Transnational Institute, Amsterdam)

Against a background of policy debates and research regarding so-called failing states, three questions are addressed in this summary of an oral presentation, made with the aid of a slide projector.

1. How can development policies towards African countries be evaluated?

Ostensibly a matter of objective investigation or management science, evaluation in the aid/development industry (as in other domains of public policy) has been shown to be heavily laden with ideological baggage and driven by political agendas. Answers to this question thus depend on answers to other questions, namely: Who pays for and sets the terms of the evaluation? Whose views count – ‘development experts’, ‘development brokers’ or intended beneficiaries? Who has access to the findings? Who takes the consequences of an evaluation’s outcome?

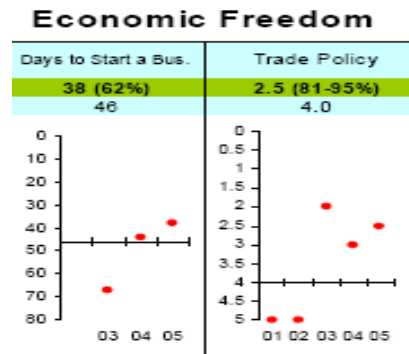
Recent research findings are illustrative. The following chart shows the outcome of two surveys:



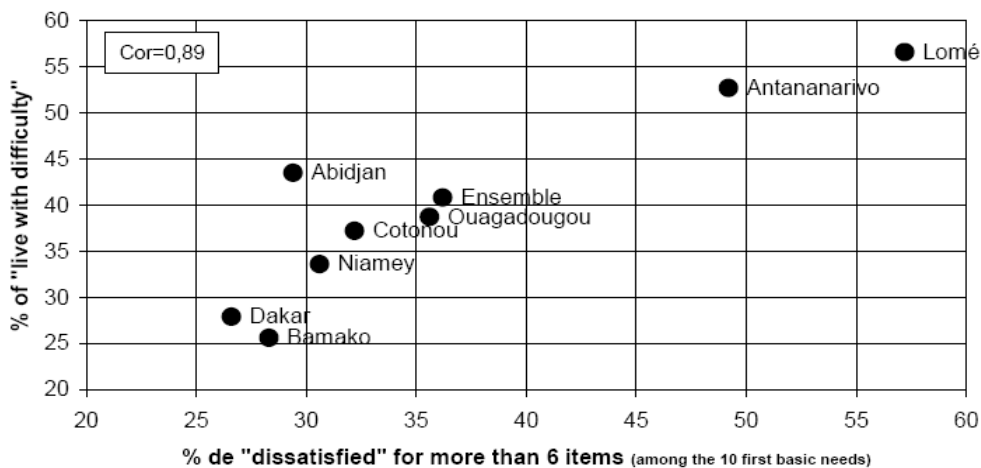
One survey was conducted among ‘experts’ (30 on average in each country), the other among ordinary citizens (4500 on average in each country). Experts were asked to estimate ordinary citizens’ experience of corrupt practices, and citizens were asked to

state their frequency of experience of corrupt practices (Herrera, 2005: 33). Even on terrains where ‘common knowledge’ reigns, the ‘experts’ can get it badly wrong.

Much also depends on the yardsticks applied. American ‘experts’ rating African countries according to their indicators of economic progress (number of days required to open a business, degree of openness in foreign trade, etc.) have given positive ratings to Madagascar’s economic policies, as shown in the following chart:



Whereas citizens of Madagascar’s capital city Antananarivo rate their own economic circumstances as very bad, far worse than ratings derived from self-assessments in other cities in Africa, whose economies are given much worse ratings by American ‘experts’.



The varieties of evaluations and assessments are many. Some of the major categories, arranged here in ascending order of public accessibility and visibility, are:

- In-house, ‘self-evaluations’
- In-house evaluations with external evaluators

- Random, rigorous studies
- Peer review assessments
- Parliamentary commissions, budget watchdogs
- Joint NGO-Donor (e.g. SAPRI)
- Think-tanks, NGOs, academic
- Investigative journalism
- Books and opinion columns by high-profile “defectors”

Let us take one of these, the peer review, an assessment approach currently in fashion within the aid/development industry. Since the early 1990s the OECD Development Assistance Committee’s (DAC) has promoted regular Peer Reviews (www.oecd.org/dac/peerreviews) of each DAC member country’s foreign aid policies and practices. Multilateral aid by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and UN agencies are by definition excluded. To fill this gap a group of bilateral donors devised the MOPAN (Multilateral Organisations Performance Assessment Network), which assembles the views of bilateral donor agency senior staff about the work of the UNDP, African Development Bank, World Bank and so forth. The UK’s DfID has recently launched its own effort to assess the multilaterals: Multilateral Effectiveness Framework (MEFF). Recent MEFF findings include such statements as: “the commonest weakness is [...] monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and reporting. [These] systems are still focusing on inputs and activities”. MEFF also finds that “Another problematic area is corporate governance. Some Boards or Governing Bodies suffer from micro-management and a lack of consensus on key development issues” (Alison, 2005).

Rarely, in-house evaluations are published. The World Bank’s Operations Evaluation Department (OED) has managed to overcome internal objections and publish findings highly critical of Bank approaches. In 1998 OED surveyed more than 30 years of Bank domination of rural development policy in Malawi and concluded that “the Bank’s approach to Malawi [...] held down the value of smallholder output and real wages and impoverished the smallholder sector” (World Bank, 1998).

More recently, the OED tabled a highly critical account of World Bank results in ‘post-conflict’ settings. Among its conclusions: “Project lending regularly failed for two reasons: over-ambitious design and inadequate supervision” (World Bank, 2005: 15).

Only in exceptional cases, however, are policy orthodoxies criticised. In most part they go unchallenged; the blame is placed on bad planning and management. Today's greater emphasis on macro policy coherence, however, is shifting the blame to some degree. But today the World Bank puts that in doubt, by stating for example that Africa will only impoverish itself further by emphasising agricultural exports. Thus, the original basis for the charge of "lack of coherence" is itself not very coherent.

Evaluations and re-assessments of approach gain or lose momentum depending on when and how they occur within a policy cycle. In this, the career of many neoliberal ideas fits the 'garbage can model' of public policy-making. This is a chaotic and wasteful pattern seen among poorly-regulated organisations. First, problems to be addressed are unclear or conflicted – often because they are defined only in terms set by the purveyors of solutions. Second, concrete ways and means actually to produce desired policy outcomes are poorly understood. Third, those responsible for policy come and go continually, with arriving cohorts routinely disparaging the work of the outgoing cohorts. It is consistent with non-transparent, ineffective governance. No promoter of a solution can be held to account if the solution fails or backfires; indeed most policy mandarins are rewarded. Cleaning up the mess is somebody else's problem.

To summarize the observations thus far about assessment practice, there is abundant evidence in the aid/development industry of:

- Ignorance of citizens' views
- Attention fixed inward to management systems, activities, inputs, and upward
- culture of secrecy
- culture of praise
- culture of impunity
- the "garbage can" cycle of policy-making
 - B U T
- Validity of aid system & doctrines rarely questioned – at least in public.

Looking beyond the assessment of aid/development policies, it is increasingly evident that such policies can bear only marginal resemblance to implementation and results. An anthropologist of aid/development programming, David Mosse, has concluded that policy does not drive practice on the ground. Rather, relationships in the industry and imperatives to preserve and expand the industry (and its jobs, perks, prestige, etc.) are more

decisive. Thus “there is a constant need for new theory to disburse funds meaningfully, to link money to goals” (Mosse, 2005: 238). Policy does matter but chiefly as an idiom, a lens, a banner to rally a coalition and legitimize its forward march. Thus, “in the development policy market place the orientation is always ‘future positive’”. “Development actors”, says Mosse, “work hardest of all to maintain coherent representations of their actions [...] because it is always in their interest to do so” (Mosse, 2004).

Implications for the Study of ‘State Failure Strategies’:

Policymaking may be more significant for sustaining the aid/development industry than for its advertised developmental effects. If that postulate is valid, then assessments of aid/development policies might usefully include hypotheses about how they:

- Affect the aid/development system itself;
- Show continuities or discontinuities over time, but with no necessary transformation of actual practice.

2. In the definition of development policies, is there opportunity for African states to play an important role?

Up to now, opportunities for active African influence to propose or steer aid/development policy have been limited in the extreme. African governments have been ‘policy takers’. This is illustrated both by aid/development authorities’ rejection of initiatives such as the 1980 ‘Lagos Plan of Action’ which had a few genuinely African-inspired components, and their promotion of such measures as:

- Structural adjustment programmes
- Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSPs)
- WTO rounds
- Millennium Development Goals
- Economic Partnership Agreements
- New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NePaD)

In none of these except the last-mentioned have African governments had more than nominal, pro-forma influence. And most of NePaD is merely a regurgitation of the market fundamentalist, ‘good governance’ formulas that the IFIs and other donors have insisted upon since the late 1970s. At the birth of NePaD in 2001, *The Economist*

magazine said that “the best thing about the latest plan to develop Africa is that it has no new ideas” (*The Economist*, 7, July 2001: 15).

African state influence is constrained, but made possible, by arrangements among interested parties, mostly in hierarchies or chains. The aid system is a chief example of these hierarchies. Aid chains consist of lines of command supposed to be run from the top. Many of the ‘laws of motion’ in the aid system can be understood against the background of aid chains. For example, they help locate concentrations of power, including political constituencies of foreign aid and what they want from the aid system. They also draw attention to the basic circuits of aid: resources and programming formulas going *down* the chain, information going *up*. They suggest the patterns by which those lower on the chains select information going back up the chain, in exchange for resources coming down the chain.

Theories about “resource dependency” may be useful here. These theories underline the tensions and dilemmas facing resource dependent organisations, that is, those lower along aid chains. Resource-dependent bodies seek to retain autonomy to pursue their own interests, yet seek to stabilize flows of resources and thus reduce uncertainty.

Organisational behaviour can be understood in light of these imperatives.

Resource dependent organizations tend to:

- Restrict, manipulate, colour information flows
- Deny legitimacy of controlling measures
- Collude with others to shape perceptions about themselves
- Enact ritual confirmations of resource use
- Try to anticipate the motivations or incentives driving those with resources
- Try to buffer themselves via, for example, stable if not integrated relationships with intermediaries and legitimizers of resource flows.

Constraining aid recipients are a number of factors. Some of those originating in the aid system are the following:

- More aid chains, more actors in them
- More exigencies (conditionalities)
- Lowered fiscal revenues, especially among poorer countries
- Continued revenue volatility in volume, timing and socio-economic formulas
- More policy dissonance, especially with 1999 donor swing toward anti-poverty talk

Perhaps in countries with decisive shifts toward programme-based aid (Sector-Wide/budget support) the end of aid chain growth may be at hand. And there are cases – Eritrea is a main example – where national governments are pruning and cutting back aid agency presence on the ground.

Implications for the Study of ‘State Failure Strategies’:

To the extent that aid chains loom large in African contexts, then theories of resource-dependent organisations may help understanding how African state authorities participate in the definition of policy, mirror or ritually enact policy, and go about their actual practice.

3. How to assess the importance of internal dynamics?

In assessing aid/development policies, the usual structure of attention is fixated on “the space of places” at state-territorial levels. These include such things as:

- Domestic actors – “Big Men”
- Coded characterizations: “Moderates”, “Pro-Western”, “anti-reform factions”
- Domestic sphere: source of spoilers (of “reform”, of outsiders’ beneficent plans)

These are important, but exclusive use of this lens is distorting. By framing attention chiefly on domestic dynamics, important external factors are neglected. A striking example is how readily it is forgotten that flows out of Africa exceed by a wide margin flows coming in as “aid”. Capital flight makes Africa a net *creditor*, not a net recipient, towards the world financial system (Boyce and Ndikumana, 2001).

Some factors are indeed exclusively domestic. However, studies of African politics and economies over the past several decades have shown that “domestic” governance and economies are profoundly extraverted. Not only finance, but also commodity trade, labour processes and cultural inter-connections are increasingly borderless. Flows through internationalized markets for drugs, gemstones, rare minerals, waste storage, arms, services in coercion and so forth are increasingly apparent. Elites develop aspirations and career paths via international connections. There are abundant possibilities and incentives to seek “exit” and reject “loyalty”.

Hence the “space of flows”, which has always been present, today looms ever larger. It would seem frequently to eclipse the “space of places” at state-territorial levels. Measures to counter the “disorder” in governance driven by opportunities and incentives offshore (for example, measures to make relationships between domestic authorities and powerful businesses like the Publish-What-You-Pay initiative) are weak in the space of flows

Implications for the Study of ‘State Failure Strategies’:

If ‘space of flows’ eclipse the ‘space of places’, then an understanding of domestic influences on policies may be helped by approaching dynamics ‘from the outside in’, *first* looking at external influences of opportunity and risk; *then* focusing on residual factors confined to state-territorial spaces.

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